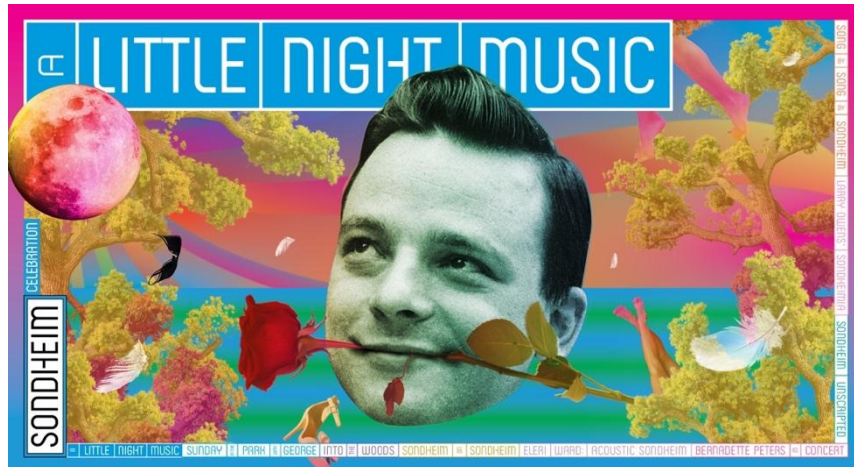


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Kory Kelly – Director of Marketing at Pasadena Playhouse:

## Casting Announced for Pasadena Playhouse’s Sondheim Celebration production of



**Book by Hugh Wheeler**  
**Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim**  
**Suggested by a film by Ingmar Bergman**  
**Directed by David Lee**

**Tuesday April 25, 2023 to Sunday May 21, 2023**

**Press Opening April 30, 2023**

**Tickets at [pasadenaplayhouse.org](http://pasadenaplayhouse.org)**

PASADENA, CA (March 2, 2023) – Danny Feldman, Producing Artistic Director of Pasadena Playhouse, the State Theater of California, announces casting for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary production of ***A Little Night Music*** (April 25 to May 21) the second mainstage production of the theater’s six-month-long celebration of the works and impact of Stephen Sondheim, the first major festival honoring his legacy since his passing in 2021.

The cast of ***A Little Night Music*** is led by Merle Dandridge (ABC’s *Station 19*, HBO’s *The Last of Us*, Broadway’s *Once on this Island*) as Desiree Armfeldt, Michael Hayden (ABC’s *Murder One*, Broadway’s *Carousel* and *Judgement at Nuremberg*) as Fredrik Egerman, and Jodi Long (Netflix’s *Dash & Lily*, Broadway’s *Flower Drum Song*) as Madame Armfeldt.

The production also features Sarah Uriarte Berry (Broadway's *Les Misérables* and *The Light in the Piazza*) as Countess Charlotte Malcolm, Chase Del Rey (Will Smith and Warner Bros' *King Richard*) as Henrik Egerman, Adam James King (*In The Heights* at Park Playhouse, *The Staircase* on HBO Max) as Frid, Ruby Lewis (Broadway's *Cirque du Soleil Paramour*, Marilyn Monroe in *Marilyn! The New Musical* at the Paris Theatre, Las Vegas) as Petra, Ryan Silverman (Broadway's *Side Show* and *Chicago*) as Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm, and Kaley Ann Voorhees (Broadway's *Prince of Broadway*, *The Phantom of the Opera*) as Anne Egerman.

The cast also includes Georgia Belmont as Mrs. Nordstrom, Jared Bybee as Mr. Lindquist, Kim Dawson as Mrs. Segstrom, Oriana Falla as Mrs. Anderssen, Arnold Geis as Mr. Erlanson, and Christanna Rowader as a standby for Countess Charlotte Malcolm and Desiree Armfeldt. Additional casting and creative team will be announced at a later date. Casting is by JZ Casting (Geoff Josselson, CSA and Katja Zarolinski, CSA).

***A Little Night Music*** follows ***Sunday in the Park With George*** directed by Sarna Lapine. Tickets and information for both are available at [pasadenaplayhouse.org](http://pasadenaplayhouse.org), by phone at 626-356-7529, and at the box office at 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.

***A Little Night Music*** features a book by Hugh Wheeler, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and is suggested by a film by Ingmar Bergman. In honor of its 50th Anniversary, the Playhouse is proud to present this unsung sensation in its full and soaring orchestration. Boasting one of the most singular and sumptuous scores in Broadway history, Sondheim's enchanting, hilarious romantic farce is a bona-fide classic of American musical theater.

### **About *A Little Night Music***

***A Little Night Music*** (1973) represents Sondheim's long time collaboration with producer-director Harold Prince, who worked with Sondheim from his Broadway debut with *West Side Story* in 1957 to *Merrily We Roll Along* in 1981. At the time of its opening on Broadway, Time Magazine called ***A Little Night Music*** "Sondheim's most brilliant accomplishment to date."

Based on Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night*, and featuring a score primarily in waltz time, the production was one of the composer's greatest commercial successes. Recipient of three Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Original Score, ***A Little Night Music*** is "heady, civilized, sophisticated and enchanting." – *New York Times*

Set in 1900 Sweden, ***A Little Night Music*** explores the tangled web of affairs centered around actress Desirée Armfeldt, and the men who love her: a lawyer by the name of Fredrik Egerman and the Count Carl-Magnus Malcom. When the traveling actress performs in Fredrik's town, the estranged lovers' passion rekindles. This strikes a flurry of jealousy and suspicion between Desirée; Fredrik; Fredrick's wife, Anne; Desirée's current lover, the Count; and the Count's wife, Charlotte. Both men – as well as their jealous wives – agree to join Desirée and her family for a weekend in the country at Desirée's mother's estate. With everyone in one place, infinite possibilities of new romances and second chances bring endless surprises.

Pasadena Playhouse's Sondheim Celebration is made possible through the generous support of Pasadena-based **East West Bank** and the **Helen and Will Webster Foundation**.

## About Pasadena Playhouse

Pasadena Playhouse is a place where people have gathered for 100 years to experience bold and important theater. It is one of the most prolific theaters in American history with a legacy of profound theatrical impact and courageous new work. In 1937, the Playhouse was officially recognized as the State Theater of California for its contribution and commitment to the dramatic arts. Today it continues that tradition of excellence under the helm of producing artistic director Danny Feldman. Dedicated to enriching lives through theater, community programs and learning initiatives, Pasadena Playhouse is a living force in the community.

### Calendar Listing for *A Little Night Music*

Book by Hugh Wheeler

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Suggested by a film by Ingmar Bergman

Directed by David Lee

Venue: Pasadena Playhouse, 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Dates: Tuesday, April 25 to Sunday, May 21, 2023  
Press opening Sunday, April 30 at 5:00 p.m.

#### Performance Schedule:

Tuesday-Friday evenings at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Tickets: Prices start at \$39  
Online – PasadenaPlayhouse.org  
By phone at 626-356-7529  
In person – Pasadena Playhouse Box Office, located at 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Information: For more information on all productions at Pasadena Playhouse visit PasadenaPlayhouse.org.

Description: In honor of its 50th Anniversary, the Playhouse is proud to present this unsung sensation in its full, original, and soaring orchestration. Boasting one of the most singular and sumptuous scores in Broadway history, Sondheim's enchanting, hilarious romantic farce is a bona fide classic of American musical theater.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Merle Dandridge

Desiree Armfeldt

—

Having made an indelible mark on stage and screen, Merle Dandridge is best known for her starring role as Grace Greenleaf in Oprah Winfrey Network's hit series *Greenleaf* which ran for five seasons. Currently she is starring on HBO's original drama series *The Last of Us*, in which she plays the leader of a resistance movement, Apple TV+'s *Truth Be Told*, and ABC's *Station 19*. Previously, Merle starred in HBO Max's first season of *The Flight Attendant*, FX's *Sons of Anarchy*, CW's *Starcrossed*, and NBC's *The Night Shift*. On stage, Merle played the role of Pharaoh in *The Manhattan Concert*

Productions' presentation of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*; and the role of Papa Ge, the sly demon of death, in the Tony Award-winning Broadway revival of *Ahrens*; and Flaherty's *Once on This Island*, which received a Grammy Award nomination for Best Musical Theater Album. Dandridge is the first woman to ever play Papa Ge, completely reinventing the character with her fearless portrayal.

### **Michael Hayden**

Fredrik Egerman

—

Broadway: *All My Sons*; *Festen*; *Enchanted April*; *Judgement At Nuremberg* (Tony Nomination); Hal in *Henry IV, Pts. I&II*; *Cabaret*; and Billy in *Carousel*. London: *Cabaret* (West End) *Carousel* - Olivier Award Nomination (Royal National Theatre and West End) Select Off Broadway: *Lady From Dubuque* (New Signature Theatre), *Dessa Rose* (Lincoln Center). Select Regional: World premier of *American Son* (Barrington Stage), *Henry V/Richard II* - title roles performed in repertory (Shakespeare theater of DC), *The Winter's Tale* (Guthrie Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Old Globe, San Diego), *Merrily We Roll Along* (Sondheim Festival, Kennedy Center) Select TV: *Evil*, *Elementary*, *Chicago Fire*, *All Law and Orders*, *Murder One*. Film: *Charming Billy* (American Film Institute Best Actor Award).

### **Jodi Long**

Madame Armfeldt

—

Jodi won an Emmy for best supporting actress as Mrs. Basil E in Netflix's *Dash & Lily*, making her the first Asian-American to win in any acting category. She made her Broadway debut at age 7 in *Nowhere to Go But Up*, directed by Sidney Lumet, the first of five Broadway shows she would go to appear in as an adult, including *Loose Ends*, *The Bacchae*, Stephen Sondheim's *Getting Away with Murder*, and Rodgers and Hammerstein's revival of *Flower Drum Song* in which she garnered an Ovation Award at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Jodi's film credits include: *Beginners* opposite Ewan McGregor and Christopher Plummer; *The Hot Chick* alongside Rob Schneider, Anna Farris and Rachel McAdams; *Robocop 3*; *The Exorcist III*; and *Born on the Fourth of July*. On television, Jodi will soon be seen in the third season of the Disney+ series *The Mandalorian* and NBC's *Chicago Med*, adding to her previous appearances in *Café Americain*, *Young & Hungry*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Sex and the City*, *Franklin & Bash*, *Eli Stone*, *The Cosby Show*, and *Sullivan & Son*, the latter for which the NY Times called her "by far the best thing about the show and maybe enough reason to watch it."

### **Sarah Uriarte Berry**

Countess Charlotte Malcolm

—

Broadway: Belle in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, Cinderella in *Cinderella* (New York City Opera) alongside Eartha Kitt, Franca in *The Light in the Piazza* at Lincoln Center Theater (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations for Best Supporting Actress), Eponine in *Les Misérables*, Nicola in *Taboo* (opposite Boy George), *Next to Normal*, and *End of the Rainbow*. Bernstein's *Mass* (Carnegie Hall); *The Boys From Syracuse*, *Tenderloin* (New York City Center Encores!); Julie in *Carousel* (Royal National Theater, Ovation Award-Best Actress); *Sondheim on Sondheim* (Hollywood Bowl) with Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Jonathan Groff, and Vanessa Williams; *A Little Night Music* (Kennedy Center). Film/TV: *Frontera* (with Michael Peña, Eva Longoria, Ed Harris), *Pretty Bird*, *Law and Order CI*, *The Light in the Piazza* Live from Lincoln Center, and Saint Jellorica in the infamous *Cats* episode of *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt!*

### **Chase Del Rey**

Henrik Egerman

—

Having recently played Pete Sampras in the Oscar-nominated film *King Richard*, Chase is thrilled to be making his Pasadena Playhouse debut in *A Little Night Music*. Last year he played a principal role in the LA industry workshop of the new musical *38 Minutes* by Edie Brickell, and has also appeared in CBS' *The Code* and as a soloist at Lincoln Center Theatre. Chase is a graduate of the Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. Thank you to Buchwald and Authentic for their incredible support. For my loving family who have been on this journey with me - What a great adventure.

### **Adam James King**

Frid

—

Adam is honored to join this company at Pasadena Playhouse. Credits include: *FBI Most Wanted* (CBS), *I Think You Should Leave* (Netflix), *Law and Order: Organized Crime* (NBC), *The Staircase* (HBO Max), and *On Your Feet!* (Emilio Estefan; Phoenix Theatre Company). Thanks to Mom, Dad, CJ, and Andrew for their constant love and to my Claire for her endless support! IG: @OfficialAdamJamesKing

### **Ruby Lewis**

Petra

—

Ruby (she/her) is thrilled to make her Playhouse debut! Prior LA Theatre credits include *Lights Out: Nat "King" Cole* at Geffen Playhouse (Ovation Nomination) and *Love Actually Live* at The Wallis. She starred as Indigo in Cirque du Soleil's premiere Broadway show *Paramour* which led to two Macy's Parades and features on Nightline and Entertainment Tonight. Television credits include *Desperate Housewives*, *Masters of Sex*, *Girl Meets World*, and the upcoming series *Sugar*, to name a few. Her self-produced, original one-woman show *Starlet* has played both coasts and held residencies in Vegas and Puerto Vallarta. [www.rubylewis.com](http://www.rubylewis.com) @rubylewla.

### **Ryan Silverman**

Count Carl-Magnus Malcolm

—

Ryan received Drama Desk nominations starring as Terry Connor in *Side Show* on Broadway and Giorgio in Classic Stage's *Passion*. Ryan starred as Raoul in *The Phantom of the Opera* and as Billy Flynn in *Chicago*. Described by *Playbill.com* as "the smoothest, most assured bari-tenor, leading-man theatre voice at the moment," Ryan was featured as Sir Lancelot in *Camelot* (Kennedy Center), *Passion* opposite Natalie Dessay (Théâtre du Châtelet), as Tony in the Olivier-nominated *West Side Story* (West End), and Ulysses in *The Golden Apple* (City Center Encores!). Film/Television credits: *Suits*, *Good Fight*, *Gossip Girl*, *Sex and the City 2*, and *True Blood*.

### **Kaley Ann Voorhees**

Anne Egerman

—

Kaley is most known for being the youngest person to play Christine in *The Phantom of the Opera*, where she made her Broadway debut. She went on to perform in *Prince of Broadway*, a musical centered around the life and works of legendary director and producer Hal Prince, in both the touring Japanese and Broadway productions. Kaley had the honor of returning to the role of Christine on the international tour of *The Phantom of the Opera* during their run in Taipei, while it was the only production in the world still performing during the pandemic. Other credits include *Candide* (New York City Center) and *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (Amazon TV).

### **Georgia Belmont**

Mrs. Nordstrom

—

Georgia is thrilled to be making her Pasadena Playhouse debut. Her career is mainly focused on the operatic repertoire. Her recent roles include: Poppea in Händel's *Agrippina*, as well as Le Feu/ Le Rossignol in Ravel's *L'Enfant et Les Sortilèges*. In January 2023, Ms. Belmont was named a semi-finalist in Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition. In the summer of 2022, Ms. Belmont joined Des Moines Metro Opera covering the roles of Isabella Stewart Gardner in Peter's *American Apollo*; and Peaseblossom and Cobweb in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other roles: Christi Khalo in Rodrigo's *Frida*, and Kate in Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*.

### **Jared Bybee**

Mr. Lindquist

—

Jared recently made his Carnegie Hall debut as the Baritone Soloist in Brahms' *Requiem* and joined the National Tour of *South Pacific* as Emile de Becque. Jared has also performed as Escamillo in *Carmen* (Charleston Opera Theater), the title role in *Don Giovanni* (Seattle Opera), The Pilot in *The Little Prince* (Utah Opera), Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* (Liceu Opera

Barcelona), the title role in *The Barber of Seville* (Arizona Opera), and covered the title role of Steve Jobs in the world premiere opera (Santa Fe Opera). He has been featured on CBS' primetime drama *FBI* as Sean Ellis, upcoming Russo brothers-produced film *Something's More than One Thing* as Joey and award-winning web series *Love in 2020* as Jagger Bloom.

### **Kim Dawson**

Mrs. Segstrom

—

Kim recently moved to Pasadena after spending over a decade touring internationally as a funk and soul singer. She is excited to be making her debut at Pasadena Playhouse. She previously starred as Brenda in *Smokey Joe's Cafe* at Little Theater of the Rockies and as a Church Lady in *The Color Purple* at The Aurora Fox Theater. Kim wants to thank her friends and family for their support, and sends a special thank you to the love of her life, Michael.

### **Oriana Falla**

Mrs. Anderssen

—

Oriana is so excited to make her Pasadena Playhouse debut. Previously this season, she made a role debut as Adina in *L'elisir D'amore* with Pacific Opera Project and Opera in the Heights. Previous engagements, include role debuts as Mimi in *La Bohème*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and The Infanta in *Der Zwerg*. A Los Angeles native, she attended UCLA and Santa Monica College. As a recording artist, Oriana sang for the soundtrack of Disney's *Encanto*. She wants to thank the creative team for this opportunity! She lives with her partner Arnold and her cat Dimpy. @oriana.falla, orianafalla.com

### **Arnold Geis**

Mr. Erlanson

—

Recent credits: *Carmina Burana* (Oregon Symphony), *Faust in La Damnation de Faust* (Boston Youth Symphony), Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (Greensboro Opera, Pacific Opera Project), Nemorino in *L'elisir D'amore*, and Tamino in *The Magic Flute* (Pacific Opera Project), Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Traveler's Prayer*, *Carmina Burana* (LA Philharmonic), *Haydn's Creation* (LA Master Chorale), Mr. Marks in *Intimate Apparel* (Lincoln Center Theater). As a recording artist, Geis has been featured in popular films and shows: *Disenchanted*, *Tom & Jerry*, and *Family Guy*. Other film/tv scores: *Nope*, *Strange World*, *Willow*, *The Super Mario Bros.*, *The Lion King* (2019). Upcoming: Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd* (Chautauqua Opera), Otto in *Emigre* (Shanghai Philharmonic, NY Philharmonic).

### **Christanna Rowader**

Standby for Charlotte and Desiree

—

Christanna is an LA Ovation Award Winner for Mother in 3-D Theatricals' production of *Ragtime* and has performed in over 16 theatrical productions and films. One of her favorite roles was playing Alice Murphy in Steve Martin and Edie Brickell's musical *Bright Star* at six and seven months pregnant. Other favorite roles: Abigail Adams in *1776*, Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, Christine in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, Marian in *The Music Man*, Grace Farrell in *Annie* starring Sally Struthers. Christanna also recently starred in Santa Monica College's short film *Alive* as Juliet/Digital Juliet, currently in post-production. Instagram: @christannarowader. [www.ChristannaRowader.com](http://www.ChristannaRowader.com).

### **Hugh Wheeler**

Book

—

Hugh Wheeler was a novelist, playwright, and screenwriter. He wrote more than thirty mystery novels under the pseudonyms Q. Patrick and Patrick Quentin, and four of his novels were transformed into films: *Black Widow*, *Man in the Net*, *The Green-Eyed Monster*, and *The Man with Two Wives*. For films, he wrote the screenplays for *Travels with My Aunt*, *Something for Everyone*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Nijinsky*. His plays include *Big Fish*, *Little Fish* (1961), *Look: We've Come Through* (1961), and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1966, adapted from the Shirley Jackson novel), he co-authored with Joseph Stein the book for a new production of the 1919 musical *Irene* (1973), wrote the books for *A Little Night Music* (1973), a new production of *Candide* (1973), *Sweeney Todd*, *the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979, based

on a version of the play by Christopher Bond), and *Meet Me in St. Louis* (adapted from the 1949 MGM musical), contributed additional material for the musical *Pacific Overtures* (1976), and wrote a new adaptation of the Kurt Weill opera *Silverlake*, which was directed by Harold Prince at the New York Opera. He received Tony Awards and Drama Desk Awards for *A Little Night Music*, *Candide*, and *Sweeney Todd*. Prior to his death in 1987 Mr. Wheeler was working on two new musicals, *Bodo* and *Fu Manchu*, and a new adaptation of *The Merry Widow*.

## **Stephen Sondheim**

Music and Lyrics

—

Stephen Sondheim wrote the music and lyrics for *Saturday Night* (1954), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *The Frogs* (1974), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Assassins* (1991), *Passion* (1994) and *Road Show* (2008) as well as lyrics for *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959) and *Do I Hear A Waltz?* (1965) and additional lyrics for *Candide* (1973). Anthologies of his work include *Side By Side By Sondheim* (1976), *Marry Me A Little* (1981), *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* (1983), *Putting It Together* (1993/99) and *Sondheim On Sondheim* (2010). He composed the scores of the films *Stavisky* (1974) and *Reds* (1981) and songs for *Dick Tracy* (1990) and the television production *Evening Primrose* (1966). His collected lyrics with attendant essays have been published in two volumes: *Finishing the Hat* (2010) and *Look, I Made A Hat* (2011). In 2010 Broadway's Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed The Stephen Sondheim Theatre in his honor; in 2019, London's Queens Theatre was also renamed the Sondheim.

## **David Lee**

Director

—

David was born and raised in Claremont, California. He graduated from the University of Redlands with a degree in Theater and Music. In 1978 he began a long career writing, directing and producing television comedy. With writing partner Peter Casey he wrote and produced *The Jeffersons* (six years) and *Cheers* (four years). In 1989 they added a third partner, the late David Angell. The first series they created, *Wings*, ran for eight seasons on NBC. Their second, *Frasier*, ran eleven seasons and made television history by winning more Emmy awards than any other sitcom... ever. Besides directing many episodes of his own series, David has directed several pilots and was a repeating guest director for *Everybody Loves Raymond*. He has won many and various awards for his work in television including nine Emmys (nineteen nominations) for writing, directing and producing, a Golden Globe Award, the People's Choice Award (twice), the Directors Guild Award, the Television Critic's Award (three times), the British Comedy Award, the Humanitas Prize (twice), and the prestigious Peabody Award. He is also an accomplished theater director, staging critically acclaimed revivals of *Light Up the Sky*, *Do I Hear A Waltz?*, *110 in the Shade*, *Diva*, *Can-Can* (featuring a new book he co-authored; Ovation award: best director), his 8 person version of *Camelot* (now licensed by MTI), *Art*, the West Coast premiere of *Casa Valentina*, and *Ragtime* (Ovation Award; Best Director' Best Musical) at Pasadena Playhouse. He directed the world premiere of *How I Fell In Love* at the Williamstown Theater Festival, *Present Laughter* and *Camelot* at the 2 River Theater in New Jersey, and *On the Twentieth Century*, *Assassins*, *Company*, *A New Brain*, *Applause!*, *Working*, *Elegies*, *Two By Two*, *Forum*, *Gigi*, and *Zorba* (Ovation nomination; best director) for Reprise! In 2007 he directed the acclaimed production of *South Pacific* at the Hollywood Bowl starring Reba McEntire and Brian Stokes Mitchell. In 2014, he again directed his *Can-Can* at Papermill Playhouse in its pre-Broadway tryout. Shortly after, he directed *Wonderful Town* for LA Opera and *Dear World* starring Tyne Daly at the Soraya Theater.